Zine%

A Nancy Drew Speedathon Fanzine

Issue No.1

Nancy Drew Speedathon - Zine%

Zine Brainstorm	0:00:00
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2025

Raising funds for Advocates for Trans Equality

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FOREWORD

There's so much to say about this zine that I find myself hardly able to say anything at all! I got into zines in late 2024 and I didn't think there would be enough interest in a Nancy Drew zine to make it happen, but, lo and behold, I wasn't the only person who was passionate about this project! The Speedathon has been a labor of love for the past 4 years, and I'm very happy to offer this to our supporters as a gift, but also to give writers and artists another way to contribute to our shared goal is raising money for important charities. Thank you to ALL of our zine mods for making this happen; every single person on the mod team brought something to the table that was vital to making this zine actually happen. Ash with her cute art style and endless motivation for organizing important information into Google docs, Maggie letting us see the results of her solo zine interest check and general zine know-how, Ellen for her insane creativity and graphic design skills, Starry for having experience in literally dozens of zines and just being someone who is there to ask questions to and offer a sense of stability, and finally to Mary, who eagerly hopped on board at the very beginning when I half-jokingly suggested this zine and fumbled around with me until we managed to chart a course and figure out what the hell this thing would be. To everyone reading this zine, please enjoy the work we've created, and if you like a piece, reach out to the creator via their social media links and let them know - it'll mean a lot.
- Veronica

When Veronica asked me to help lead a Nancy Drew zine for the Speedathon, I thought it would be a tiny thing. Then we got more mod applications than expected, and more contributor apps than expected, and what began as a tiny project grew into a full sized zine that we all could be proud of. We are so, so thankful to the fandom for showing up and letting us do this. Thank you to all our contributors and mods for showing so much love and enthusiasm for this little project to celebrate our incredibly niche fandom and our favorite girl detective. Enjoy, Clue Crew!
- Mary

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CLUES and community:

Finding Belonging in the Nancy Drew Fandom

By Carol Scott

I came to the wide world of *Nancy Drew* through the yellow spine books, which my elementary school library held an extensive collection of, with the Her Interactive games coming into my life shortly thereafter. However, despite my love of getting involved fan communities online as a child, I never engaged with the Nancy Drew fandom until the late 2010s, when someone's reblog of a Nancy Drew post on Tumblr informed me of the extensive fandom for the games. As such, I got to play catch-up on the games I missed - try as I might to convince my mother to buy every game that appeared at our local Wal-Mart, little me was not successful - and fandom in-jokes, many of which had solidified by the time I stumbled upon the fandom.

Fandoms have probably existed in some form as long as culture has existed – one can imagine devoted stans of Beethoven, Chopin, etc. Maybe the first cave artists had devoted fans. Generally speaking, the first studied and recognized fan communities were followers of Sherlock Holmes and Jane Austen fans, both active in the late 19th century, even creating some of the earliest examples of fanfiction. A convention for science fiction fans started in 1939, launching the concept of conventions for fan communities – something that has resulted in fan-run events and the "fan-ification" of events such as the San Diego Comic-Con that were once events for industry insiders.

Like the early literature fandoms of Holmes and Austen, Nancy Drew fans found ways to connect and create meaning from a beloved character who's been reimagined countless times. How a 1930s teen might connect with Nancy is entirely different from how a 2020s teen might engage with the character, letting Nancy be a mirror for culture and society. Some of the most interesting demonstrations of this occur in the varying online communities. After I stumbled upon the Tumblr community, I realized that Nancy Drew fandom wasn't just one unified space, but rather a web of subcommunities, each with its own culture. The Nancy Drew fandom presents several fascinating splits, in my opinion. Whereas many fandoms suffer from their splits, such as certain fandoms that see frequent spats between fans of the source material and that of adaptations, the Nancy Drew fandom is all the stronger for its book fans, game fans, and fans of the various TV adaptations. Even within the game-first side of the fandom, the various platforms upon which groups formed present differing approaches to the games. The primary Facebook group, for example, approaches topics differently

from the subreddit (r/nancydrew), both of which diverge from the various active Discord communities. While there is some overlap in membership between these groups and others, the most active members of each community tend to stick to one platform, allowing unique cultures and in-jokes to develop on each platform.

This diverse fandom ecosystem has roots that stretch back decades, long before social media platforms emerged and ruined society. The Nancy Drew community got it start on the internet in the late 1990s with various message boards. Nancy Drew Sleuths, one of the largest fan clubs, started in 2000 with a Listserve and held an "unofficial" 2001 convention wherein several fans met ghost author Mildred Benson shortly before her passing.[1] Today, they publish *The Sleuth* magazine and run an online store in addition to yearly conventions themed around various Nancy Drew books.

As someone who's long struggled with the concept of belonging – never quite feeling "in" with my real-life friends in elementary and middle school, never feeling comfortable as an immigrant and later a repatriate, someone into pop music and horror movies just a little too much – online fandoms have provided much to my life. No fandom has given me more than the Nancy Drew fandom, which has allowed me to foster many great and wonderful friendships, including three of the people that I'd rank in my top 10 friends list. Perhaps most pertinent, those three friends joined with me to host the Nancy Drew Speedathon in 2021, which has since run five times and raised nearly $25,000 for great causes, including trans youth, the Palestine Children's Relief Fund, and clean oceans. The Speedathon's community aspect – bringing together many different segments of the Nancy Drew community, despite its focus on the games and its foundation on Discord – to celebrate the joy of fundraising for causes that are near and dear to the community has been invaluable to myself in a post-pandemic world that seems to breed discontent and apathy. The conclusion of the 2024 Speedathon, which saw the community raise over $7.5k for sick and injured children in Gaza, far and away our highest total, signaled to me the growing strength of this community.

The Nancy Drew community is diverse, united by a shared affection for the teen detective. That connection manifests in many forms - building fan sites in the early internet era, creating art and content, or simply bonding over a shared love of mystery. What unites these efforts is a desire to build something meaningful. This fandom carries a long-standing tradition of turning passion into purpose, often for the greater good. As we look to the future, I'm excited to see how the community - and the Speedathon, in particular - continues to engage with Nancy Drew's legacy and bring people together across the globe.

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1 "Collecting Nancy Drew With Jennifer Fisher," March 15, 2024, in Regular Nancy Drew, podcast, MP3 audio, 1:16:31, https://creators.spotify.com/pod/profile/regularnancydrew/episodes/Episode-80-Part-1--Collecting-Nancy-Drew-with-Jennifer-Fisher-e2gvp8v.

NANCY DREW #09

DANGER ON DECEPTION ISLAND

Carolyn Keene

How Nancy Drew taught me to keep insane things IN MY BAG and leave OTHER THINGS BEHIND: a Retrospective

by Ella Gill

The first Nancy Drew game I ever played was *The Secret of the Scarlet Hand.* My sister and I crowded around our ginormous slate gray Windows95 PC and meticulously took notes by hand on everything Maya-related. Side note: if you're looking for a way in which Nancy Drew games directly affected someone, said sister now has her PhD in Mesoamerican archaeology. That's right, she became a real-life Joanna Riggs. Although I'm told that she takes providence documents very seriously. (No joke, she works in repatriation). I remember the incredulous looks we shared under the fluorescent lights of our parents' basement when Nancy, without permission, picked up and moved the Tzolkin Calendar Stones right out of their glass exhibit case. *Wow, these are heavy,* Nancy groaned. We laughed at the absurdity. No one would just *take* a priceless artifact like that… right?

Recently I dug out my games again. I'd haphazardly thrown them into my bag when I packed for New York City over a decade ago, but never really thought to play them much. I've had a rough year, quite honestly. Between losing my job, struggling to find a new one, and various personal crises that I won't go into, a few hours of comfort and nostalgia here and there sounded nice. In addition, I've found a nice little community within the Nancy Drew subreddit. Imagine my surprise when one of the repeat topics I've seen in regards to the games is Nancy's tendency to walk into a space that does not belong to her, pick up random items, and carry them around with her for the duration of her investigation.

A napkin soaked in turpentine (Thornton Hall). Speaking of poisonous things that are absorbed into paper, I recently cleaned out my childhood bedroom. In the drawer of my nightstand I found an innocent-looking sheet of looseleaf paper folded into a thick square. *Oh, must be a forgotten homework assignment from 2013,* I mused aloud to myself in true Nancy Drew fashion. But it wasn't. It was a poem that my ex boyfriend from over decade ago had written to me days after our breakup in January of 2015. I can't remember everything he wrote down in his venomous little ball-point pen, but one line that I'll never forget is, "because feminism is your thing/you wear it like a magic ring."

I'll admit that for a couple of days the words haunted me at night. They rattled about in my head the way Bruno Bolet's glass eyeballs would've rattled about in Nancy's backpack had she not found that eyeball case. It was something between second-hand embarrassment and horror at the fact that I'd ever entertained the presence of such a horrible poet. On a scale of one to "listen my child to this story of dreams," ex's writing ranks at about -10,000. The rest of the poem is similarly toxic drivel about how two people who believe different things can still have a relationship. This relationship began before I'd learned to articulate that, yes, we can disagree about ice cream flavors (although I truly believe that Toni Scallari is a monster for making bacon ice cream). We cannot, however, disagree about human rights.

Now, listen. I'm not a crazy person. I'm not going to frame this idiotic melange of words written in wobbly, male handwriting. However, I kept the poem right there, neatly folded up in my childhood drawer. Would there be something cathartic in burning the page? Probably. Did I have a momentary urge to mail it back to him with a strongly worded poem of my own? Maybe. But both of those seemed like a lot of negative energy to devote to something that, truly, has no effect on me anymore. The day before I flew home to New York City, I put the piece of paper inside a plastic bag so its toxicity wouldn't leak onto my mom jeans and packed it in my suitcase. It's still there in my suitcase. It doesn't deserve a place in my new home, but also doesn't belong in my childhood room anymore. It deserves to stay zippered in limbo; a reminder of where I came from, but no part of who I will become.

Loose carbide (Blue Moon Canyon). I believe in other timelines; I believe in alternate universes. I firmly believe there's a timeline in which I own an artisinal candle store. Allow me to explain. I have about two pounds of beeswax pellets sitting under my bed, waiting for the day that I suddenly decide to delve into candle-making. For a New Yorker living in a 750 square foot apartment, it's an insane thing to waste precious apartment space on.

When I lost my last bartending job over a year ago, I saw it as an opportunity to look at my life and realize where I could be more efficient, more frugal. My conclusion? I was spending too much money on scented candles at the local home goods store. (This was true.) Why should I buy *new* candles, when I could just as easily refill the pretty glass containers *I already had* with new wax and some essential oils? This is when I decided it was a good idea to purchase beeswax pellets in bulk on Amazon. Similarly to how Nancy scooped up a handful of loose carbide because "it might come in handy," I thought, "this bag of beeswax pellets is about to improve my life." A better option would've been to look for a mental health professional to evaluate why *this* of all things appeared as the clearest way to improve my life.

I cannot emphasize this enough: I spent absolutely no time learning how to

do it. Well it turns out there's a reason for the serious upcharge. It took a couple of months for my roomate to hesitantly ask me why there were suddenly very odd-smelling candles with bizarrely crooked textures littered across the coffee table. Well Nancy Drew might be good at literally everything except etiquette (I don't care what the Hardy Boys say, I'll never forgive her for "where's Ma?") however I, Ella Gill, am terrible at making candles. Maybe I lack the patience and the delicate sense of smell, or maybe I just don't have that magical "candle-maker" touch. If a Masterclass course appears on candle-making, maybe I'll invest some time into learning a new skill.

Meanwhile, I'm going to keep my beeswax where it belongs and let go of that fantasy candle-witch version of myself.

All the oranges ever (Thornton Hall). I swiped a handful of small liquor bottles from the glass cabinet in my grandma's basement after she passed away. It was strange to stand in that house for the final time. It was weird to see the tiny nook in the basement where my cousins and I used to crowd around the computer to play Nancy Drew together.

My grandparents never drank liquor, but for some reason had a huge stash of collectible travel bottles in a sliding door glass cabinet in their basement. I can trace my glass bottle obesession back to the first time I read T*he Secret of Shadow Ranch* as a six-year-old. Nancy probed through Aunt Bet's antique bottle collection with a knitting needle in search of a letter from Dirk Valentine. And that was that. *I must have my own bottle collection,* I thought. Clearly my childhood obsessions don't fade easily, otherwise I would not be writing for a Nancy Drew publication.

In any case, the glass cabinets filled with rows of little, ornate bottles fascinated me. One was shaped like a violin (filled with apricot brandy), two (filled with Dutch Genever) were clay townhouses. There were even a miniature bottles of Kahlúa, Chambord, and Sailor Jerry spiced rum. Of course, as a child I didn't know what any of these things were, but they sounded *fancy*.

As I stood there, looking at the case one last time, I thought to myself *Green bottle in…*in where? In cellar (basement) of course. Sadly there were no green bottles to take. However, I did take the miniature clay houses from Amsterdam, the apricot brandy-filled violin, and a Parisian glass Eiffel Tower filled with cognac. I didn't think, I just stuffed them into my tote bag. Maybe I'll need them to charge my phone one day.

What I am leaving behind

Solid Gold Hearts (Shadow Ranch). Marie Kondo would take a look at my closet and ask me if all these items truly spark joy. And the answer would be, *No, Marie, they absolutely do not.*

I used to sing semi-professionally. In the sense that I would sing on stages at various local venues in my hometown and pretend to be a Midwestern version of Joan Baez. I wore gauzy lace dresses, dyed my hair bright red, and often wore cowgirl boots. I strummed a guitar and sang about peace, trains, broken hearts, being heartbroken on trains, and, perhaps most importantly, murder. (Does the phrase "murder ballad" ring a bell?) It all sounds a bit Frances Humber & Dirk Valentine, does it not? No wonder that was always my favorite book.

Well, the truth is, over a decade later, I still have those gauzy lace dresses in my closet. (Yes in the same apartment with the beeswax.) I haven't worn any of them since I was in my early twenties (I'm 29) and, frankly, they are all probably about two sizes too small for me now. But, mostly, they just don't fit anymore. And I'm not talking about the fact that I no longer wear a Free People XS. I'm no longer the 17-year-old ingenue with the lilting soprano and the earnest crease between her eyes. I can't say that I've picked up my guitar in years. Any creases in my skin are permanent now. I favor straight-leg jeans and a blazer rather than ivory lace. Those dresses in my closet are not going to get worn…at least not by me.

Maybe it's time I walked away from that old self. Maybe it's time to embrace the new.

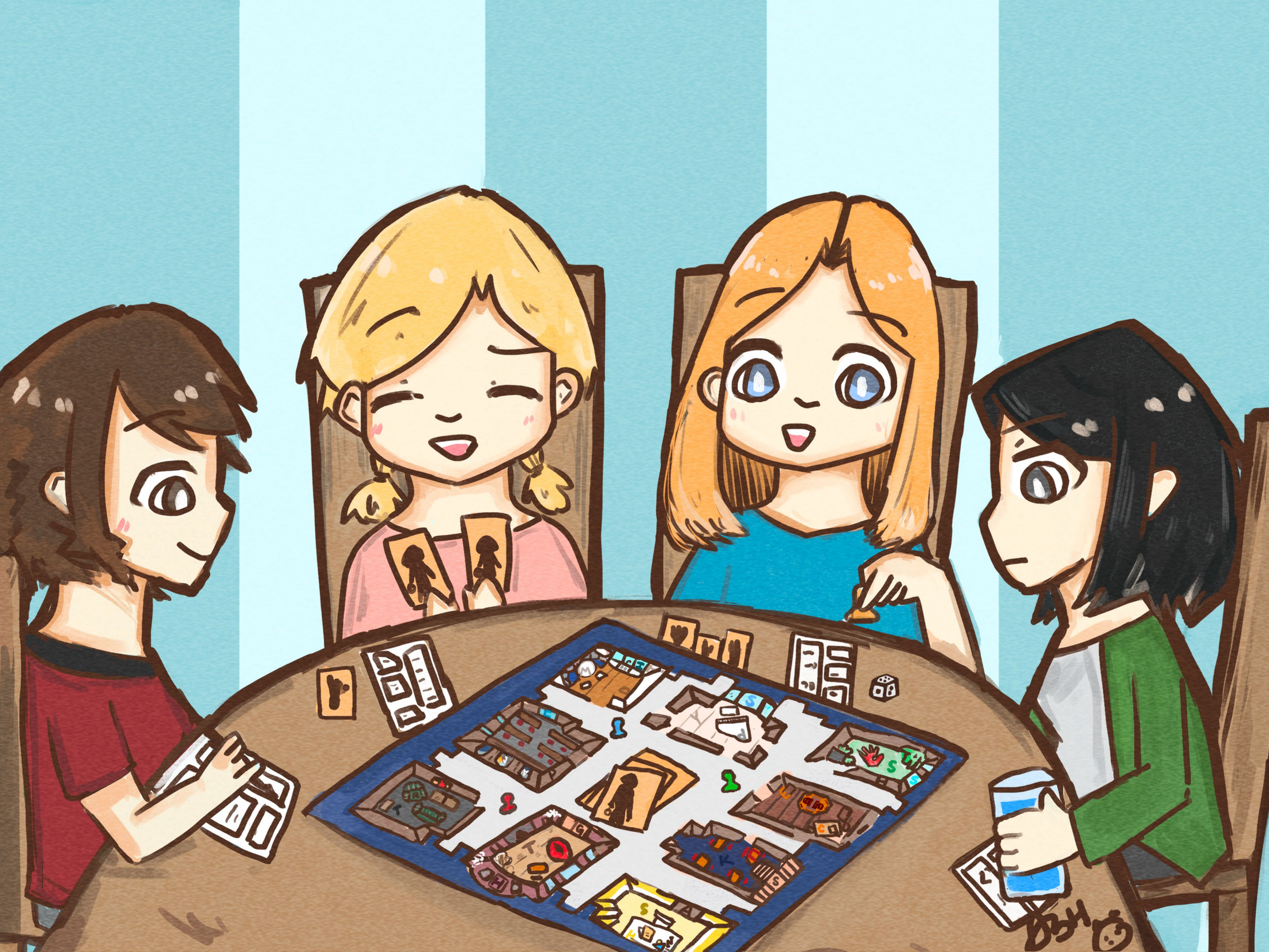
Gold Bars (Ghost Dogs). Yet again, Nancy would rather catch the villain than take the gold herself. I used to laugh at the way Nancy would go so far as to lock the villain in the room with the gold. But, as I've gotten older, I realized that it was never about the treasures for Nancy. Nancy never cared about the gold. She cared about stopping the injustice and righting the wrongs. She cared about freeing those four adorable rottweiler pups from that weird underground cave. She cared about making sure that Shorty couldn't continue to terrorize Aunt Bet and Uncle Ed. She cared about freeing orca whales, helping quirky lesbian-coded women open a bed and breakfast, and forcing Bess to crash secret society meetings. Ok, that last one is a joke.

We could all learn something from Nancy Drew. Nancy takes what she needs for her current case. Sure, the items might seem odd, but they always serve a purpose. Then next time, she starts again fresh. You won't see her bringing a clamming tube to Arizona. She doesn't let her past cases weigh her down. She puts them in that cute little scrapbook and lets it live in its home in her sunny, yellow bedroom. My bedroom in New York City is also yellow and sunny. There are some items, like my dresses from *The Case of the Wannabe Folksinger* that I would like to let go of. I'm sure that Nancy already would have. One day I'll be more like her.

NANCY DREW #48

HAUNTING of CASTLE MALLOY

Carolyn Keene



ROAD trip of THE SEVEN storms

By SnapdragonsYearRound

The road trip was supposed to be perfect. Okay, maybe not *perfect* perfect—seven days travelling from hostel to hostel wasn't much compared to an island resort—but it was supposed to be at least relaxing. And driving through a raging thunderstorm wasn't exactly Bess' definition of relaxing.

"Uh, George?" Bess eeped, her hand clutching the interior door handle. "Are you sure we're going the right way?"

"I'm sure," George said. She took a deep breath and tightened her hands on the wheel. "I think."

"You *think*?!" Bess shrieked. "What do you mean you thi—"

A flash of lightning struck a pole on their right, and the two of them screamed.

Yep. This was exactly what both of them needed to relax.

Unfortunately, day two wasn't much better in terms of weather. If anything, it was worse, and it was all Bess' fault.

"Bess, you're overreacting," George said slowly. Even as she was peering forward to see through the haze of rain that crashed against the windshield.

"I'm telling you, I'm *cursed*!" Bess insisted. "That's the only explanation! Why else would I have been kidnapped at a beautiful resort in the Bahamas, gotten thrown into a hole to starve to death, and then have my whole road trip schedule conveniently line up with one of the largest domestic thunderstorms on record? Huh? *Huh?"*

"It's—Uh, a last bit of chaos before everything settles down," George reasoned.

"But it's supposed to settle down *now*," Bess said. "We had that reservation for the zipline course and bungee jump, and we won't get to do any of it. Unless we wanna risk a lightning shock to the face."

"At least we get a refund?" George sighed. "The storm's predicted to let up tomorrow. So let's get to the hostel, take a shower, and order a stupid amount of takeout."

Bess leaned back against her seat.

This wasn't how this was supposed to go. Not at all. Not even a little bit! The whole reason for the road trip was to give the two of them a real vacation. Nancy was already off on another mystery, so Bess figured it might as well be a week where she and George could spend time together and have fun. Not bemoan the cancellation of another activity the two of them had taken a painstakingly long time to agree on.

"I really am cursed," Bess groaned.

"Bess, you're not cur—"

A lightning bolt crashed somewhere behind them. Bess and George jumped into their seats.

"Okay, you're cursed," George squeaked.

"I told you!"

The storm was supposed to let up on day three of the trip. It did not let up on day three of the trip.

Bess blew a raspberry and crossed off another to-do in her planner. "Guess horseback riding is out. I don't blame them for canceling that one. It's one thing if we get struck by lightning, but the horses? I'd rather die."

"No one's dying," George said. She was standing next to the hostel's window, right beside the trash can filled to the brim with multiple empty take out containers. "Seriously, don't jinx us when you have to drive us to the next town."

Bess groaned and flopped onto her bed. "Why can't you drive? I mean, you've done a great job so far. And remember, I'm the cursed one. If you drive, we'll be fine!"

George raised an eyebrow and crossed her arms across her chest. "Not the deal, Bess. I already gave you a break by taking over driving duties yesterday, now, it's your turn."

"I'm *not* driving."

"I'll get us tickets to whatever movie you want in the next town."

Bess pouted. "… What about popcorn?"

"Popcorn *and* candy."

Bess scrambled off the bed. "What are we waiting for? Come on, George. Let's go, go, go!"

Bess bit her lip as she scrolled through the top "attractions" for tourists in the town they'd planned to use as a rest day. After all the plans they'd made for the first three days of the trip, the two of them agreed to spend the fourth day lounging in the one hotel room they'd booked for the trip. It was nicer than the hostels, and they had a pool (not that they planned on using it, since anything regarding swimming still hit a little too close for the both of them). But after spending the first days of the road trip cooped up in rooms, both Bess and George needed a break.

"Closed, closed, open—nope. Also closed." George sighed. "Do people here really have nothing to do if it's raining?"

"They have bowling," Bess said.

"Which you hate," George replied.

"And they have a mani-pedi salon."

"Which *I* hate." George shuddered. "I still don't get how you can stand other people touching your hands and feet. It just feels… ugh, gross."

"I guess the benefits of looking fabulous don't outweigh the downsides for you."

Bess groaned and flicked through more non-options. There was a strip mall nearby, but that was a bust. Bess could count on one hand the amount of times George willingly went shopping with her, and it was usually because Bess won some kind of bet. No way would she go now, and no way was Bess in the right headspace to come up with a bet she'd probably win.

Bess shut off her phone. Looking through it was useless at this point. The reason the two of them had planned the trip in advance was so they could actually coordinate on things to do, and not end up spending half the day figuring out what activity wouldn't start a mini family feud. If they'd chosen to go to the beach, it'd have been easy. George loved swimming in the ocean, and Bess loved reading a book beside it. It was the kind of trip they used to take as a family back when they were kids. The kind of trip the Bahamas vacation was supposed to be.

But instead, Bess got kidnapped, George almost had a heart attack from worrying about her, and now both of them were stuck in a hotel while a thunderstorm pelted heavy raindrops against the windowpanes.

Eventually, Bess crashed onto her bed and stared up at the ceiling. It was a yellowish-brown color, though the light made it look lighter than it was. If

Bess looked at it close enough, it was almost like those stones in the cave. It was brighter here, but maybe at night, when they turned off the lights, it'd look the same. Like when Bess was trapped and alone, waiting for someone to hear her and find her.

"Bess?" George said. "You okay?"

"Oh!" Bess jumped. "Y-Yeah. I'm okay. I'm fine. I'm goooood."

"Uh-huh. So why have you spent the last fifteen minutes staring at the ceiling?"

"Fifteen?!" Bess screeched. "Uuuh… I mean, oh, fifteen?"

George sighed. "You know, you don't have to push yourself so hard. If you're not ready."

"What do you mean?" Bess asked. "I'm not ready to go out because we don't have a place *to* go out to."

"I meant the trip," George said. "Bess… You were *kidnapped*. Yeah, it was for less than a day, but anything could've happened to you. It was supposed to be a vacation, and then you were taken, and now you can't even look at a pool without zoning out."

"I *know*, George. I'm the one who went through all that!"

George froze. After a moment, she sat on the edge of her bed and stared down at her feet. "I-I'm sorry. I shouldn't have reminded you of it."

Guilt crawled up Bess' throat. "No, I'm sorry. I know you're just trying to help."

George nodded. "Do you wanna turn back?"

"What? Go back to River Heights? But we're only halfway through the road trip!"

"Yeah, and it's stressing you out. You're worried about all of our plans getting canceled, you cursed Zeus when we found out the thunderstorm's gonna follow us for the rest of the week, and you think you're cursed!"

"I *am* cursed!"

"That's my point!" George sighed again. "A vacation's supposed to be fun. And… There's no point if you're not having fun."

"Of course there is!" Bess shot back. "You need to have fun, too!"

George snapped her head up, which made Bess duck hers.

"I… I know that what happened on Dread Isle didn't just affect me," Bess said, her voice lower and softer. "It hurt you, too. You didn't get kidnapped or anything, but you were stuck in the hotel doing everything you could to get the

satellite phone working, and *you're* the one who flinched when my dad suggested we go to the beach. I… I just…"

"Just what?"

"Just want you to have fun," Bess said. "And you like doing all those outdoorsy, exercise things, and with the thunderstorm… you can't."

George stuttered. "I-Is that why you suggested all that zipline and horseback stuff?"

"I mean, yeah. I don't mind the outdoors, and those things mean that I don't have to run around and get super sweaty and show people I don't know how to kick a ball without pulling a hamstring or something."

George chuckled. "So… You're saying you didn't have fun ordering take out and watching reality tv shows?"

"Well, I'm not saying *that*. Take out and tv shows is always fun. Especially when it's the dumb shows."

"And you didn't have fun going to the movies and getting the giant bag of popcorn?"

"Of course I did! It was a literal giant *bag* of *popcorn*!"

"And you're saying that you didn't have a little, just a little, bit of fun driving through the storm?"

Bess blinked and turned to her cousin. "Uh, George, where are you going with this? Because if this has a point, you've lost me."

George grinned. "I'm saying that… maybe you did have fun. Because all those things? I thought they were pretty fun, too."

Bess felt a little smile come onto her smile. "Yeah. But not the driving bit, though. There you're *definitely* projecting."

"Alright, alright. I like driving in the storm."

"Why?"

George shrugged. "Feels like I'm outrunning it, you know?"

"I very clearly don't."

The two of them laughed, and it felt good. Just spending time with George felt good, and it only got better as the two of them got older, as they learned how to leave any dumb squabbles behind them. Bess knew that she and George were fundamentally different people, but when it came to the important stuff, none of their differences seemed to matter. Maybe that's the reason they could survive a road trip where everything was going wrong, after an event that was certain to alter both of them for life.

"There's a strip mall in town," George said suddenly. "Wanna go?"

"Wait, wait, wait." Bess sat up on the bed and stared at her cousin in shock. "You, George Fayne, are asking me to go *shopping*?"

"It's the best option we've got," George said. "And I think you'll have fun."

Bess' smile shifted into a grin. "Okay. Okay! Oh, oh! But only if tomorrow we do something you think is fun, even if I don't usually go for it."

George blinked in surprise. Bess raised a hand. "Deal?" she asked.

George laughed, and shook Bess' hand. "Deal."

As per the new weather forecast, the storm did not let up. It followed Bess and George for the rest of their trip, as they went to the strip mall, an indoor basketball game, an all-you-can-eat dessert buffet, and a random dog show they got tickets for five minutes before the competition started.

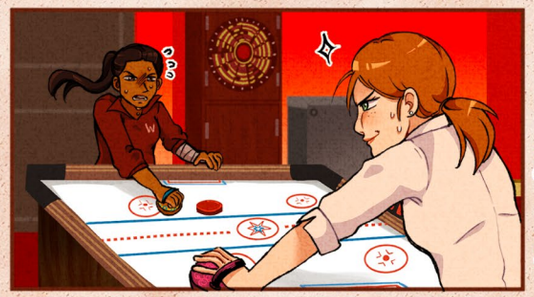
It was the strangest trip Bess had ever been on, and it—somehow—was also one of the best.

Waverly Academy

My first day at Waverly Academy was quite the shock. I figured a bit too late that we weren't allowed to climb trees. Well... this got me a few demerits.... I'll have to be more careful after that. Or be more inconspicuous.

Izzy promised to help me... after I'm done with her chemistry homework. Between this and Rachel's stuff, I don't know where to turn ! I came here to investigate, not do college homework !!!

The good side of snack duty is that I can listen to other students's gossip. It is surprisingly helpful for my investigation ! And of course, I can secretely feast on snacks without being caught.



Last things I needed were Megan and Leela's photos. But I had to beat Leela at her games first. We started with the shuffleboard game. Then came darts. Can't lie, I really struggled with those but I did win, trust me !

Waverly Academy

Welcome: Becca Sawyer | Home | About Us | Academics | Library Page | Stu

Links

The Campus Word

- World-Class Detective on Campus!

As all of you know, a series of horrifying incidents have been plaguing the students of our beloved Waverly Academy. The culprit? A person masquerading as the Black Cat of Waverly legend. Our hero? An undercover teenage detective!

Unbeknownst to all of us, our headmistress had hired Nancy Drew, a world-renowned detective, to uncover the truth of the Black Cat. Under the guise of Becca Sawyer, she posed as an exchange student from France, using the relative calm of Spring Break to search for clues. She quickly deduced that the students who were targeted were the prospective valedictorians in old Ramsey Hall, and wasted no time in following leads, solving old puzzles, and seeking guidance from valued members of the student body. And she did it all while keeping up her duties as snack shop boss!

The detective's skills shined bright, and only obvious in hindsight. As Becca Sawyer, Nancy Drew fooled all of us with her cover story. Maybe that's why she solved the case so quickly. With her wit, intellect, and the help of certain students in Ramsey Hall, Nancy Drew uncovered the identity of the Black Cat in only a few days—one of Waverly's valedictorian candidates.

If you're stunned, you can only imagine how I felt when I learned the news. And if that wasn't shocking enough, Nancy Drew made an even bigger discovery: the reason behind the attacks. It wasn't spite, jealous, or a desire to remove the competition standing between her and the title of valedictorian. No, this was all to find a book. A book that contained Edgar Allan Poe's final unpublished works, which was hidden in Ramsey Hall by its founder, our own Rita Hallowell.

Though I am not at liberty to elaborate more on the student who caused the multiple attacks against Waverly's prospective valedictorians, I can gladly announce that she was immediately expelled. I am also happy to confirm that experts have confirmed the validity of the book Hallowell hid at Waverly, meaning that our institution has been the haven of a manuscript many never even knew existed. Though it will take some time, I have been assured that we at Waverly will be among the very first to know its contents.

I've always known that Waverly Academy was special, and it's even more heartwarming to know that Waverly has been safeguarding a book that contains the works of one of our nation's greatest poets. I can't imagine that Rita Hallowell knew when it'd be uncovered, but I can say that she'd be more than grateful that our undercover teenage detective finally brought it to light. Thanks to Nancy's efforts, the Black Cat is no more, and Waverly is back to being the safe, caring community it always has been.

Thank you, Nancy Drew! Good luck with your next mystery, and know that you will always be welcome back at Waverly!

The Campus Word weekly blog is written by current student body president, Izzy Romero (alias, SnapdragonsYearRound).

XXI

MA 'N PI
CONVENIENCE STORE
WM9A
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SH4A
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CANUTE, OKLAHOMA
CREEK AVE

Love letters to A Culture

By Liv

I was tightly clutching my white teddy bear, navigating my screen around the *ryokan*, and biting my nails. It was nearing my bedtime, and I had yet to unlock any new doors or obtain new information from any of the suspects. The only thing I'd accomplished in my last thirty minutes of gameplay was finding a dozen number puzzles, which was not terrible, but not exciting either. Finally, I came across a red curtain over a room, which one of the suspects had previously told me I couldn't enter, and realized I had stepped into a bathroom.

I hovered my cursor near the mirror before clicking on it. Instantly, my screen froze. A lady in white stood at the back of the mirror, jumping closer and closer to the screen.

I was paralyzed.

I stood there, shaking in my pajamas, until she was right behind me. Then, the mirror cracked.

I took off running and screaming to my grandmother's room, leaving my teddy bear behind. I didn't open the game for the next months to come.

Halfway around the world

My first Nancy Drew computer game was *Shadow at the Water's Edge,* which I had played for the first time when I was ten years old. It was definitely not the best game to play as a child, but it still bloomed my love for the series. Since then, I'd played a dozen other games that took place across Europe and the United States, but *Shadow at the Water's Edge* held dear to my heart.

After all, this was Nancy's only venture into Asia, and as a Southeast Asian, I figured it was the closest game that represented me and my culture.

Except, not really.

I am from the Philippines, a developing country in the Asia Pacific region stereotyped with adobo, karaoke, and nurses. Japan was miles away, both in distance and culture, to the life I lived everyday.

In real life, I don't know a lot of people who enjoy *Nancy Drew,* whether it be the books, the show, the movie, or the games. Most people I know who are remotely passionate about *Nancy Drew* are friends I'd personally introduced to the books or games. The majority of the content I see on online forums and Discord servers feature players based in the USA, which is typical for most fandoms. Still, I wish I could meet more friends who resided in the Global South with whom I could share my interests.

Being half a day away from the fandom also meant that I missed out on a lot of stuff I couldn't participate in, including buying merchandise from the Her Interactive shop, or even from small businesses on Etsy. My lifelong dream is actually to acquire the official Nancy Drew duvet I would often see when I perused the official merchandise. The shipping costs, however, would probably be double or triple the price of the duvet.

In every place

In its entirety, I saw every Nancy Drew game as a love letter to the place that inspired it, even if it wasn't perfect. It was always amazing to me how much history and culture they were able to condense into one game, turning educational and boring information into something fun and exciting. *Shadow at the Water's Edge* was one of those games, and it made me wish that there were more of the original games that took place in Asian countries.

It can only make me think of what more there could be if Her Interactive dipped their toes into other cultures, especially around Asia. I'd love a game that takes place in Hong Kong, with mesmerizing visuals of the Victoria Harbor coupled with a street food selling game featuring pineapple buns, fried noodles, and lobster balls. Maybe there could be one in South Korea that showcases the K-pop industry, with puzzles related to their traditional culture. Or maybe, just maybe, there would be one that takes place in the Philippines, featuring jeepney rides, rare flora and fauna, and *taho*. It might be wishful thinking, but a love letter to my country in the form of an extremely charming point-and-click mystery would be my ideal game.

I visited Japan last winter, and it added all the more to how I saw *Shadow at the Water's Edge.* The train stations were as much of a puzzle of their own to navigate, just like how Nancy had to decipher it in the game. Making bento boxes with Yumi set a surprisingly accurate standard of how cute and delicious the food would be, and the *ryokans* and *onsens* are still a marvelous tourist destination on social media.

As an adult, one of my goals in life has become to travel more, wherever I can go. The Nancy Drew games taught me to appreciate every little piece of the new places I've been to, whether it be the manhole designs of Tokyo, the tok-toks of Thailand, or the sunset on the braces of the Philippines. Now, I still see the mystery in every place, and wonder what untold stories we have yet to uncover wherever we visit.

A step forward

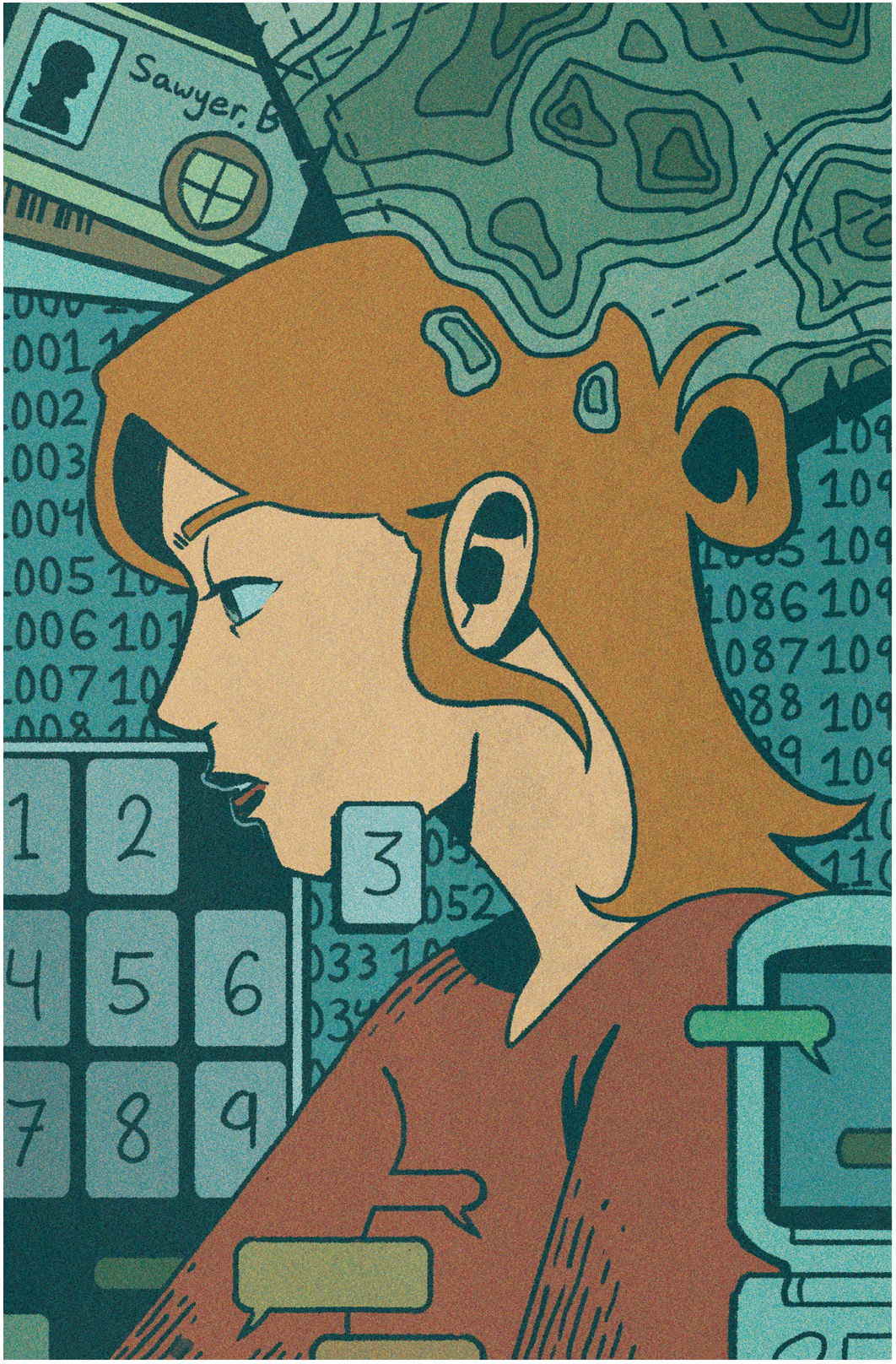
With the release of the latest game, *Mystery of the Seven Keys,* I couldn't help but have hope for a future of mystery games that made me feel represented in the media. Because as much as I loved everything about Nancy Drew, there were still aspects I couldn't figure out simply because I wasn't raised with the same ideals as the games were made.

However, at its core, Nancy Drew is still a character for all, no matter where you're from and who you are. The one thing Her Interactive always got right across all of their games was how they never showed Nancy's face. From the very start, Nancy Drew was intended to be a model for all the girls who read her books or play her games. She is and will always be the same character no matter where she goes, whether she stays in River Heights or travels across Europe—strong, intelligent, and brave.

And even back then, that ten-year-old girl could still see someone like me in her.

Here lies the Thornton family tree —
Split in two rotting branches
to form a new foundation
for the same old growth
for the hungry ghosts
slipping into the cracks
among all the others —
They take root where
all Thorntons go —
little black seeds
of death drinking
blood-soaked earth
until all they can do is
tear up tangled roots
or settle into the shade
Beneath the Thornton family tree

— preamble to Savannah Woodham's upcoming book,
The Real Ghosts of Thornton Hall



For Saint GEORGE WAS POSSESSED BY The CHASE

By Blue

In her junior year of high school, the guidance counselor asked Nancy, "What do you want to do with your life?" Hot off her latest major case, the future of Nancy Drew, *Girl Detective* was the talk of the town. "You'll need to start applying for colleges next year." A hesitation, a shuffling of papers in the counselor's hands. "If that's what you want to do."

The question of college had always been an answered one: of course she'd go. None of the trades interested her, it was an expectation, a necessity, a continuation of a routine she'd followed her entire life. But now, staring down pamphlets for Emerson, for River Heights Community College, for the University of Illinois, another path opened.

"I think I'd like to be a detective," she said.

The guidance counselor perked up, reaching for another pamphlet. "Ah! Then you'd need to join the police academy--"

Nancy wrinkled her nose. "Not a *police* detective. A *detective*-detective. Like a private eye? Like what I've been doing."

It was the wrong answer. The counselor's mouth screwed off to the side. Nancy had expected this reaction and the lecture that followed, the insistence on back up plans and career viability, and had left the office with a stack of pamphlets on the police academy, journalism, law school, and history. All sat at the bottom of her locker, gathering dust.

It had changed nothing; she knew what she wanted.

People said that they'd always known Nancy was going to be a detective. They'd bring up stories, laughing at how she used to wander into forbidden rooms, poked through people's desks and bags, tucked small objects into her

pockets and wandered off with them. Called her *nosy* and a *snoop*, joked about how her father was a lawyer and her mother a journalist, so *of course* she'd have a propensity for this behavior.

Nancy wondered, often, if this behavior would have been less charming, the stories and jokes less affectionate, had she never solved that first major case. Had she gotten worse grades, had the interest in lockpicking and fingerprinting, the impolite questions not all been ascribed to some kind of *calling*.

What no one understood was that it ate at her. The mystery, the connections, the clues--it wound its way into her mind and took root until she could think of nothing else. Life fell by the wayside, each decision calculated by how close it would bring her to the solution. Her own health and safety relegated to second thoughts until the case's end.

The train was rattling beneath her, too inconsistent to be soothing and just constant enough to be largely ignored. *0101, 0102, 0103, 0104--*

Someone's hand settled on her shoulder, and Nancy jumped, attempting to elbow them in the shins.

"Woah!" Joe skittered back, one hand held up in surrender, the other clutching a plate. "It's just me! A little, uh, a little jumpy there, huh?"

Nancy lowered her arm, scrubbing a hand across her face. "Oh, sorry," she said. "I didn't--I was focused on this." She gestured to the locked vent in front of her. "I can't figure it out."

Joe folded himself down next to her, casting a wary look at all the papers scattered around her. "Maybe you just…don't have the right clue yet?"

Maybe--and she'd considered that, heavily, torn apart all her notes and organized all the information she had in as many different ways as she could imagine, and still she hadn't made any breakthroughs on any of the remaining puzzles. She shrugged, bending forward to continue with her guesses. *0105, 0106, 0107--*

"Hey, uh…" Joe's hand settled on her arm again, gently pushing her hand down. "It's past midnight, you know." He waved the sandwich in front of her face. "And we know you missed supper."

Physical sensations came flooding back in--sore muscles, dry mouth, burning eyes, an empty stomach, and the smell of roast beef. She took the sandwich, and turned so she was leaning against the wall while she ate it. "Thank you," she said, after a moment. "I'll go to sleep soon."

"I don't think this is one you can brute force, you know." He climbed to his feet, holding out his hand. "We're stopping in Copper Gorge tomorrow, you should get some rest before then."

She dreamt that night of safes, numbers ticking up one after another. Train cars stretching out across the plains, Lori appearing and disappearing, lights dancing out the window. She woke up nauseous, the vent a lurking weight on her mind.

"I heard you were up late," Frank said. Nancy paused, looking over her shoulder at him. They were making their way up the rocky path to the crypt in Copper Gorge. Frank because he was following a thread from a book, Nancy because the new location, the amount of potential clues, had burgeoned her mood and set her mind spinning in new directions. "Joe had to make you go to bed?"

"A bit hypocritical," she said, "considering the time *you* sent that text about the crypt."

Frank shrugged, continuing after her. "I got distracted."

She laughed, her breath puffing up in front of her. Hesitating, she asked, "Do you…do you feel it, too? When on a case? The…the drive?"

He frowned. "Obviously I want to solve the case."

"No, not like that," she said. "It's more like…" A hunger, an itch, a bone deep pull. "Like I can't think of anything else?" A tangled mess that coalesced into a bright clear goal. Something that swallowed her whole.

He nodded, thoughtful, a furrow in his brow. "Yeah," he said, "I guess I do." But she could tell by the look in his eyes, the casual way he said it, that he didn't understand her at all.

Alexei took a drag of his cigarette and Nancy pretended the smell didn't burn her nose. "I should have done more to prove it wasn't you," he said. "Help, somehow."

Nancy scuffed her toe against the alleyway. In the early hours of the morning, she'd been released from jail. Ned had picked her up and taken her home, sat there in her house while she showered and ate and tried to sleep, and pretended he didn't notice when she slipped out of the house only a few hours later.

There was still a layer of grime on her skin, itchy and tight, and worming its way deeper into her. "Why did you stop being a detective?" she asked.

Smoke curled in front of him as he sighed. "Cases stopped coming," he said. "People stopped looking at me the same. Everything was just…gone. It wasn't really my choice."

Her future was withering in front of her, shrinking down into antique stores and years of bitterness. She couldn't look at him as she said, "They threw a brick through my window."

Alexei didn't say anything, just reached over and squeezed her shoulder.

"We worry about you sometimes," Bess said.

Nancy marked down another security camera on her map. "It's perfectly safe," she said. "No one is going to catch me if I'm careful." And even if they did what was the worst that would happen? She gets kicked out of the resort?

George spoke, this time. "That's not what we're talking about, Nancy. It's not just the--can you look at us, please?"

She froze, then made one last note, and looked up. They were sitting on the bed opposite her, sunburned and tense. "...What's going on?"

"We're…" Bess shifted, uncomfortable, twisting a blanket in her hands. "Not sure if this is a good idea?"

Nancy blinked. "Oh! It's not--it'll be really easy to sneak into the office while the rest of the--"

"That's not the point," George cut in. "We *know* you can get in there and we *know* you'll find a clue, but…why does it matter so much?"

She frowned at that. Ever since arriving at the resort, there had been a string of burglaries. Always during resort events, always without a trace. Nancy suspected--knew, really--that the staff was involved in it. And if she could just… "Because it's…it's a case? Someone is *robbing* people and--"

"And the authorities were called!" George said.

Bess pressed her lips together, nodding rapidly. "Yeah, Nancy. You know, you don't…you don't *have* to solve every case that you come across. Especially when you're on vacation."

But it wasn't a--they knew, as well as she did, that the authorities were often worse than useless. What were a few robberies in a resort, when the guests would just be leaving in a few days anyways? Besides, it was hardly a diversion from her vacation--she could only sit poolside for so long before she got restless. "It's not bothering me, though."

She wanted, badly, to get back to her map before the mental notes she'd made faded fully. But her friends were still staring at her, still tense, and so she listened as Bess said, "We're…Okay ignoring all of that--what about our plans tonight? We were supposed to go to that show. But if you're breaking into the office…"

Nancy had calculated for that, already. "The office will be empty starting at nine--from there, I'll be able to investigate and we can make the show at eleven."

"So you're not joining us at the beach then?"

She had…forgotten about that. About the plans to enjoy the sunset and the waves, before getting ready for the show. Maybe if she timed it right she could make both…? Something twisted in her gut.

George sighed, pressing her fingers against her forehead. "We don't mind the mystery solving, really, Nancy. It's just…we all planned this vacation together, and since we got here you've been running off interrogating people and searching for clues, and it's just…" She lifted her head, looking at Nancy. "Can we just have a night where you're not doing that? Where we're just hanging out?"

She wanted to protest, badly. Argue that the thieves would strike again tonight and evidence could be destroyed. There was only so much time left at the resort and--well. There was only so much time left, here, with her friends.

The map in front of her called out to her. She ran the numbers on the show, wondered if she could sneak out of the room late tonight and investigate then, without being exhausted the next day. She looked hard at her friends, saw the tense lines around George's mouth, the guilty look in Bess's eyes. "Sure," she said, as something coiled tight and heavy in her stomach. "You're right. I can--I'll put it on pause. No investigating."

Nancy rarely went undercover, and so when Becca Sawyer, transfer to Waverly Academy, took shape, she had put hours of work into her. She had formed a family, a backstory, favorite courses different from Nancy's own. She had looked up academic schedules and flight paths and cafes in Lyon--all things Nancy could sprinkle into conversation to make Becca Sawyer *real*.

It hadn't mattered, of course--no one at the school knew who Nancy Drew was as a person, let alone Becca Sawyer. And no one asked the questions she had prepared for and no one noticed that Becca was just as nosy as Nancy, and that Becca asked odd questions and had odd habits. It hadn't mattered--Becca, when put up against Nancy's personality, had never had a chance.

"Your mother was very good at aliases," Carson said once, in the days after Nancy's return from Scotland. "She could become anyone she wanted." He smiled down at her. "But I always got the real Kate."

He liked to tell Nancy she got her mystery solving from Kate--but that must have been all she'd gotten, because if Kate could slip in and out of identities like her father said, then Nancy was stuck in her own skin and mind. Immutable and obsessive.

"Am I a bad girlfriend?" she asked. She was tracing the lines on Ned's hand, cataloging each mark. There was an ink smudge on his finger, a scab on another.

Was he taking notes earlier today? Studying for a class?

Ned jolted next to her, and Nancy could feel his gaze turn on her. She kept her eyes pinned to his hand. "What? What kind of question is that?"

It was easy to lay out the facts. The thrill of the last case had worn off, and now, in the empty space it left behind, her mind had filled with this. She kept tracing his fingers. "I forget things--big things, like dates and anniversaries. I'm always running off and doing things. I forget to call and I travel a lot, and all I ever think or talk about is mysteries."

Some of these they had fought about. And while she'd tried to change, it had only been in small ways. Likely inconsequential in the grand scheme of their relationship, in who she was.

"I'm gone, too," Ned said. "At Emerson. And, sure, you forget to call and you travel a lot, but--Nancy, you've been like this our *entire* relationship. What brings this up now?"

She chewed on her lip. Iceland and discovering Dagny's divorce had. "Just thinking."

Ned laced his fingers in hers, stopping the idle tracing. "Have you ever thought, Nancy," he said, and she tipped her head back to look at him, "that those are the things I find charming about you? The travel, the adventuring, the single-mindedness?"

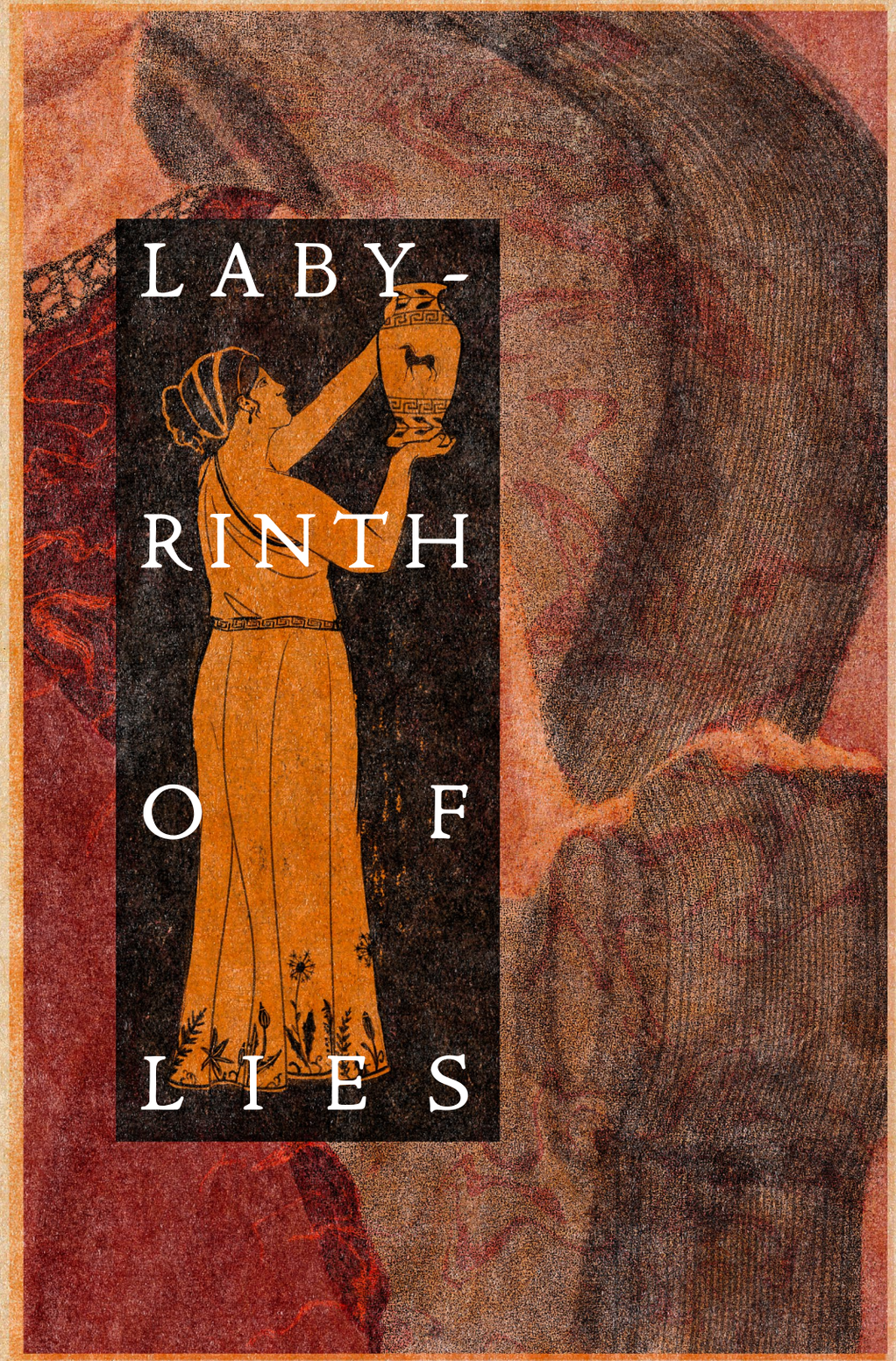
There was an earnest look in his eyes, and tenderness behind that. He wasn't lying--and why would he? What would he gain from it? Still, for reasons she didn't understand, she needed time to sit with it. To think on what he said. Turn it over and over in her mind like one of her puzzles, until she understood all it had to offer.

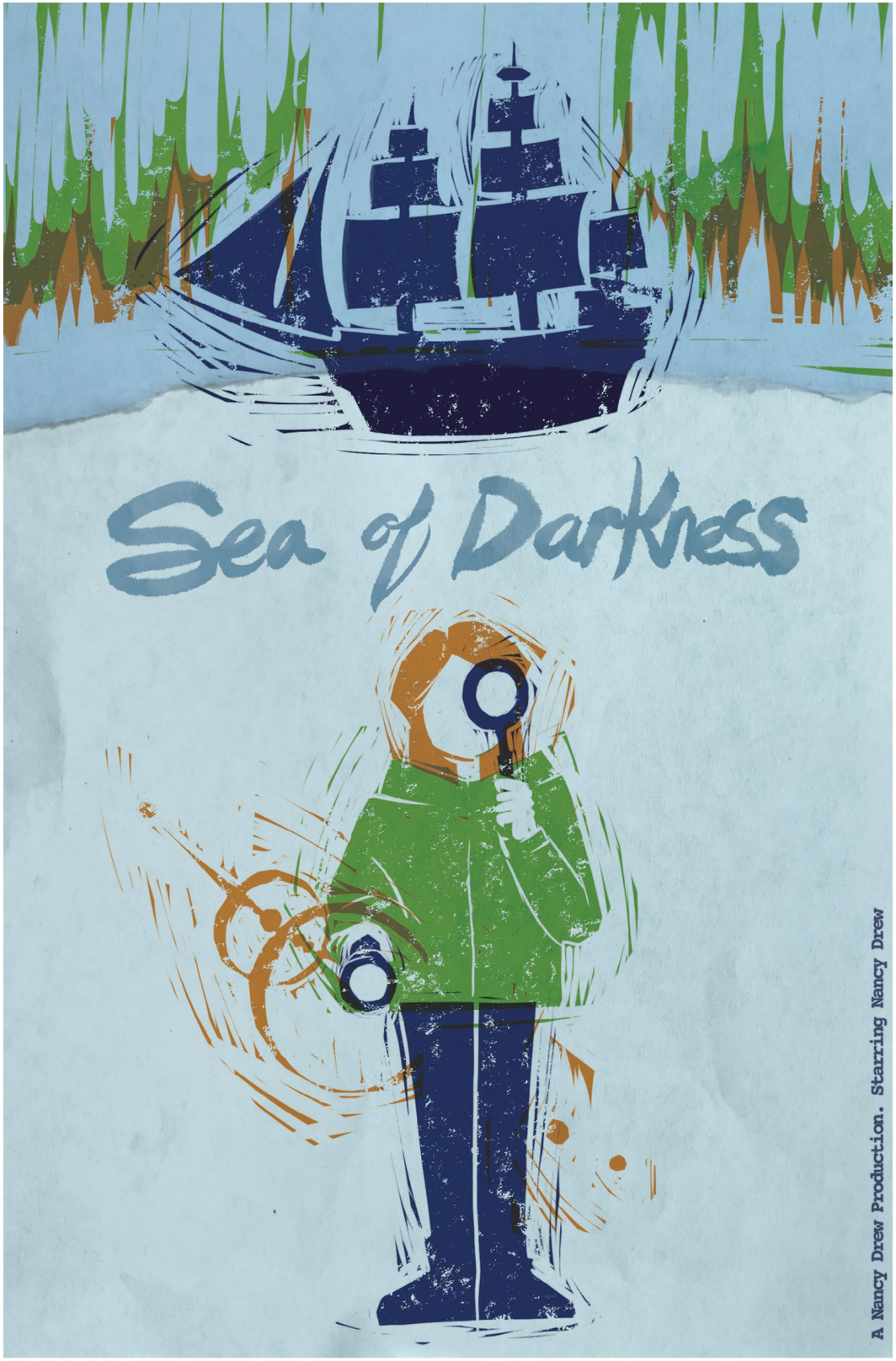
And he gave it to her, pressed together on the couch, his thumb stroking the back of her hand.

Sonny Joon had once asked her "Why do you do this?" It was a repeat of a question she had asked before--"Why do you believe in this?"--when they had found the artifact his grandfather had led him to.

And it was a simple answer--he didn't have a choice. His grandfather had offered an explanation for why he was different than the others, for all of his quirks, and he had taken it.

Her answer, while staring at the stars projected above, was just as simple: "It's in my nature. Just as it's in yours to believe."



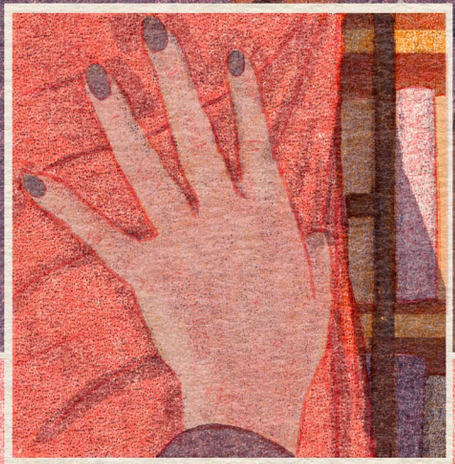

Sea of Darkness
A Nancy Drew Production. Starring Nancy Drew

Times up
KRINGLE
@motion_bird

In my experience,

we can cover twice as much ground if we work

side-by-side.



If we're going to work *"side-by-side,"*

you'd better learn to keep up with me.

HOMEMADE POMEGRANATE molasses

by Plague

Xenia Doukas can really do it all, can't she? In LIE, she tackles being a writer, director, lead actress, and a criminal mastermind as effortlessly as if each role were merely the size of a pomegranate seed. What better way to celebrate Xenia's versatility and Persephone's story than with and equally as versatile ingredient: Pomegranate Molasses. From marinades to vinegarettes to desserts and toppings, this ingredient shines through it all. It can even be used in mocktails for a sharp, fruity kick*. You can find this ingredient ready made in bottles at your grocery store (I get mine from my local Halal market) or you can order online.

OR! With just a little effort and time, you can make your own at home! Just like *Persephone in Winter* from LIE, this recipe series will feature four recipes, or scenes. Each "scene" will draw inspiration from a Nancy character who will be acting alongside our chosen ingredient to showcase its adaptability and establish Pomegranate Molasses as truly the Queen of Condiments. And probably Hades, too. The only thing I'm missing is an absurdly impossible hydraulic system for our scene changes.

INGREDIENTS

(makes enough to make all other recipes once)

- 4 Cups Pomegranate Juice, store bought or from 8 pomegranates' arils (But using the pomegranate arils is, like, a lot of work for this. I guess it's not so bad if you think of it as a mini game, though.)
- ½ Cup Sugar
- ¼ Cup Fresh Lemon Juice (about one lemon)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Combine ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat.
- Bring juice to a boil and lower heat to medium-low to gently simmer.
- Simmer for about 45 minutes, uncovered. Stir occasionally so the bottom doesn't burn. Mixture will become darker in color.
- Once liquid thickens, reduce the heat to low and continue to simmer for another 15 minutes. You'll know the pomegranate molasses is finished if you can dip a spoon into it and it coats the back of the spoon.
- Remove from heat and let cool for 30 minutes. Mixture will continue to thicken as it cools. Pour into a jar and store in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.

*BONUS RECIPE: The Bess Marvin

Mix 2 Tablespoons of Pom. Molasses and 1 tsp of simple syrup with 12 fl. oz. of sparkling water. Enjoy a fun, fruity, and bubbly drink that our girl would surely love. Add 1-2 oz of vodka or your alcohol of choice to transform it into The Mel Corbalis, for a tasty drink with a bit of a punch!

POM molasses BBQ chicken drumsticks

One of my great disappointments in life is that I never had a teacher who could hold a candle to Professor Beatrice Hotchkiss. Hotchkiss is such a wonderfully eccentric character and truly the star of ANY Nancy game she graces with her presence. By those accounts, it seems only fitting that our beloved professor would be the inspiration for our main course, BBQ Chicken Drumsticks! Of course, this charming woman is far too zesty for a traditional BBQ sauce, so we're replacing a portion of the ketchup with our pomegranate molasses to match her zeal. Multiply the recipe by 6.25 for a Hotchkiss-sized portion of 50 drumsticks. Rock and roll, dears.

INGREDIENTS
(4 servings)

- 8 bone-in Chicken Drumsticks

"BBQ" SAUCE
- 1\2 Cup Pomegranate Molasses
- 3 Tbsp Apple Cider Vinegar
- 1 Tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- ¼ Cup Brown Sugar
- 1 ½ tsp Yellow Mustard
- 2 Tbsp Ketchup
- 1 tsp Smoked Paprika
- ½ tsp Onion Powder
- 2 cloves Garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp Water
- ¼ tsp Salt
- ¼ tsp Ground Black Pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- Combine sauce ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to low and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Let cool.
- Rinse and pat dry the chicken drumsticks. In a bowl, place the drumsticks and half of the sauce then toss to coat. Let marinate for 30 minutes or overnight.
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Line a baking sheet with foil and place a wire rack on top. Arrange drumsticks on tray an inch or so apart.
- Bake in the oven for 20 minutes. Flip and brush with sauce and bake for another 7-8 minutes. Flip, brush again, and bake for another 7-8 minutes.
- Brush again and move rack up to the broiler. Broil on low for 3-4 minutes. Flip, brush, and broil again for 3-4 minutes. Chicken should be no longer pink at the bone and the juices should run clear. An insta-read thermometer should read 165 degrees Fahrenheit when inserted near the bone.
- Let rest for 5 minutes before serving and brush with remaining sauce.

CHEESY polenta and POM molasses ROASTED Brussels Sprouts

Side Dish

Venice, Italy is first and foremost a city of trade and as such has adopted many different foods and made them its own. The mild, versatile, and inexpensive corn grain made its way from the Americas in the 16th Century to this Mediterranean archipelago and was quickly adapted and paired with local staples. Margherita Faubourg, the frugal diva of Ca' Nascosta, serves as inspiration for this dish as the humble polenta is elevated by the rich and creamy goat cheese pairing nicely with the tart and slightly bitter roasted Brussel sprouts roasted in our Pom. Molasses.

INGREDIENTS
(4 servings)

POM. MOLASSES BRUSSELS SPROUTS

- 3 Tbsp Pomegranate Molasses
- 3 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 2 Tbsp Balsamic Vinegar
- 1 Tbsp Honey or Maple Syrup
- 1 tsp Garlic Powder
- ½ tsp Black Pepper
- ½ tsp Salt
- 32 oz Brussel Sprouts, Halved and Rinsed

CHEESY POLENTA

- 2 Cups Water
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1 Cup Milk
- ½ Cup Polenta or Instant Polenta
- 2oz Goat Cheese
- 1/8 Cup Freshly Grated Parmesan Cheese
- 1 Tbsp Butter

INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking tray with foil and lightly coat with cooking spray.
- In a large bowl, combine pomegranate molasses, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, honey or maple syrup, garlic powder, pepper, and salt. Add halved Brussel sprouts and toss to coat. Pour out onto baking tray.
- Bake for 25 minutes, turning sprouts at the 15 minute mark.
- At the 15 minute mark, begin the polenta. If using instant polenta, begin with around 5 minutes left instead
- In a medium sized pot, bring milk and water to a boil over medium-high heat. Add salt.
- Reduce heat to low. While quickly stirring, slowly pour in polenta so that no clumps form. Stir continuously for 1 minutes. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. If using instant polenta, cover and simmer for 3-5 minutes stirring occasionally. Polenta will thicken into a porridge consistency. If it's too thick, you can add in more milk to reach desired consistency.
- Remove from heat and stir in butter and cheeses until melted and combined.
- Divide polenta into two dishes. Spoon the Brussel sprouts and any liquid over top. Lightly drizzle with pomegranate molasses if desired.

POM molasses & ORANGE Snickerdoodle COOKIES

If Jane Penvellyn had been successful in her attempt to bake cookies, what do you think they would have tasted like? Maybe sweet and lightly spiced, but with a zing of malicious intent you didn't anticipate from a child? Snickerdoodles are one of those cookies that needs a little bit of "zing" or acid to help it along in the cooking process. This can be achieved with cream of tartar, but in this recipe we're using both that and our tart and fruity Pom. Molasses. We're also using orange zest to really capitalize on the fruity profile. They're complex. They're fluffy. And most importantly, I promise I have gone through extensive testing to make sure the oxidation rate of these cookies is at a safe level and will in no way burn down the kitchen of your family's historic manor. We're looking at you, Jane.

INGREDIENTS

(makes roughly 18 cookies)

TOPPING

- 1/3 Cup Sugar
- 1 tsp Cinnamon

COOKIES

- 3 Cups All-Purpose Flour
- 1 tsp Cream of Tartar
- 1 teaspoon Baking Soda
- 1 ½ tsp Ground Cinnamon
- ½ tsp Salt
- 1 Cup Unsalted Butter, room temperature
- 1 Cup Sugar
- ¼ Cup Pomegranate Molasses
- 1 Egg + 1 Egg Yolk, room temperature
- 1 tsp Vanilla Extract
- 1 ½ tsp Fresh Orange Zest

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR THE TOPPING

- In a small bowl, mix together 1/3 cup sugar and 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon and set aside.

FOR THE COOKIES

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.
- In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon, and salt. Set aside.
- In a large bowl or in a stand mixer fitted with paddle attachment, add room temperature butter and 1 cup sugar.
- Mix on high speed until smooth and creamy, about 2 minutes. Add pomegranate molasses, room temperature egg and egg yolk, vanilla extract, and orange zest. Mix on medium-high until combined, scraping down sides as needed.
- On low speed, slowly add flour in 3 parts until just combined. Do not overmix. The dough will be thick.
- Roll dough into balls using about 1 ½ tablespoons of dough each. Roll in topping mixture and set on a parchment lined baking sheet 2 inches apart. Optional: Add extra topping on top of each cookie for a little extra crunch.
- Bake for 10 minutes. The cookies will be very fluffy and soft. You can use a spoon to flatten them gently for a less rounded shape. Each cookie will be uniquely wonderful like all of us in the Clue Crew.
- Allow to cool on sheet for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.
- Serve with vanilla ice cream and don't forget a little drizzle of Pom. Molasses! These cookies will stay fresh for 7 days in an airtight container at room temperature.

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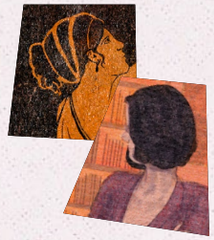
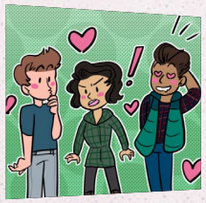


Ellen
naancydrew

Hannah/Fairmer
fairmerthefarmer

Lauren Michelle
henrikvanderswoon
thelocreative

Lore WinterAE
andstuffsketches



Maggie
magpiebee

motion_bird
motion_bird

Nyagimaru
nyagimaru

poppydadasarthouse
poppydadasarthouse

surelyanne
surelyanne

3V4C
3V4C

writers

For Saint GEORGE WAS POSSESSED BY The CHASE

Blue
the-blue-phantom
GalacticHawks

CLUES and community: Finding Belonging in the Nancy Drew Fandom

Carol Scott

How Nancy Drew taught me to keep insane things IN MY BAG and leave OTHER THINGS BEHIND: a Retrospective

Ella Gill
redellaspeaks

Love letters to A Culture

Liv
substack.com/@inpartialfulfillment

— preamble to Savannah Woodham's upcoming book *The Real Ghosts of Thornton Hall*

Mary Woodard
writingwoodard

HOMEMADE POMEGRANATE molasses

Plague
plaguerat306

ROAD trip of THE SEVEN storms

The Campus Word
- World-Class Detective on Campus!

SnapdragonsYearRound
snapdragonsr
SnapdragonsYearRound

senior detectives
(the mod team)

Mary
Head & Writing Mod
writingwoodard

Veronica
Writing & Social Media Mod
veronicaebuchanan

Starry
Organizational Mod
starryroyalty

Ash
Art Mod
pand_ashh

Maggie
Art Mod
magpiebee

Ellen
Graphic Design & Art Mod
naancydrew

This is my first time participating in a zine, and I couldn't have asked for a better fandom to start with. Nancy Drew games will always be close to my heart from riding the train to Blue Moon Canyon to exploring Prague. Thank you to the the rest of the mod team for having me as part of the team, and to all our amazing artists and writers who did an amazing job coming together to put something phenomenal for the community. Best of luck to all the speedrunners and keep sleuthing everyone!
- Ash

thank YOU!

I never expected that someday, I would find a community of wonderful, creative, inspiring people who love nancy drew as much as I do. I wish sometimes I could go back in time and talk to little pre teen Maggie-- a little weirdo, who had yet to discover her queerness, found joy in video games and art, and spent so much time in bed from her chronic illnesses-- I would love to hug her and tell her that someday she would have figured things out, would be playing games and making art that she loves with people who are incredibly generous and accepting, all while raising money for an incredible cause. I'm so excited to see this project to fruition, and I'm even more excited to continue to be a part of this community and see the speedathon and the Nancy Drew zine grow in the years to come. <3
Much love,
- Maggie

To see my childhood portrayed with so much love is such a joy to behold. Zines have been a part of my life for so long, and yet, it never gets old to watch people rally together for a project that showcases their passion, energy, and effort to create something special. This entire team has worked so hard to make this Nancy Drew zine and to see their hard efforts paid off is the least that they deserve, along with the entire contributor team that gave us several months of their lives and their best work to show off for the final PDF. Please be sure to tune into the Speedathon and watch everyone kick some ass in the games!
With all my love,
- Starry

If you're reading this that means that you donated to Advocates for Trans Equality, so thank you so much!! This project would not have been possible without knowing that you all would show up for the Speedathon, so thank you for your support over the years. I've been watching the Speedathon since the first year and have always lamented over not being able to contribute in any way other than donating (since I would be a terrible speedrunner.) The excitement I felt reading that the Speedathon would be creating a zine and needed a designer was unreal. Thank you to the artists and writers for trusting me with your precious pieces of art, I've loved watching the pieces come together and I'm so glad everyone can finally see them. <3 Let's do it again!
- Ellen